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TOP SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION

File return to
R - Mr. Trueheart

November 30, 1953

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Resettlement of Chinese Agents Used in Korea

Reference: My memoranda of September 21 and October 23 on this subject and Taipei 299, November 24.

This morning Col. Burke showed me a November 27 message from General Ennis on this matter. After reviewing past exchanges with Washington on the subject, General Ennis went on to report the following, in substance:

1. Pursuant to Washington instructions, the agents were advised on about October 30 that their repatriation was assured but could not begin until early 1954, simultaneously with the repatriation of the regular POWs.

2. The agents were initially satisfied, but within three weeks 51 of the 98 agents then active advised their supervisors that they would "take action into their own hands" if their repatriation did not begin before January 1, 1954. The remaining 47 stated that they were willing to continue their missions "but only if repatriation was granted to those who desired it."

3. Unless the UN Command takes action to satisfy the agents' demands, the following may result:

a. Disaffection of the 47 remaining agents and loss of a significant source of military information.

b. Compromise of past and present use by UNC of PWs as agents, through escape of disaffected agents.

c. Allegations of violation of the Geneva Conventions and the Armistice Agreement on the part of the US and the UN Command.

General

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General Ennis concluded by requesting the concurrence of G-2 Washington to the sending of Col. Barrett (former military attache in Taipei, now retired and serving with the FEC) and an advisor from the unit handling the agents to Taipei to discuss the problem with Ambassador Rankin and General Chase. The objective would be to work out arrangements for entry to Formosa of those agents who desire immediate repatriation, with the full knowledge and collaboration of the Chinese Nationalists, but without publicity.

Col. Burke reported that an interim answer had been sent to General Ennis on November 28, telling him that G-2 could not now concur in the Barrett mission but that the matter would be taken up with the Department of State again on November 30.

I told Col. Burke that I would consult the appropriate people in the Department and give him a position on the Ennis proposal as soon as possible. I indicated, however, that we might wish to consult the field before reaching a firm position. Meanwhile, I said that I thought it was worth pointing out that the situation was now quite different from what it had been in October, when we last talked about it. At that time, all that the agent handlers had requested was assurance that the agents could eventually be resettled in Formosa; it was clearly implied there was no expectation that the agents would be repatriated before the regular POWs. The Department had authorized the giving of such assurances but had opposed any approach to the Chinese Nationalists at this time, on the ground that it was unnecessary and was risky, in view of the possibility of a leak. The situation was now completely different. First, the Far East Command now wishes to repatriate some of the agents immediately. Second, it now appears (from Taipei's 299) that the Chinese Nationalists are fully cognizant of the situation, so that there is presumably no additional security risk involved in discussing the matter with them. Col. Burke agreed that this was a fair summary of the situation.

William C. Trueheart